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U.S. CHARGES EIGHT DEFENDANTS IN TWO CASES ALLEGING ILLEGAL INTERNET SALES OF PRESCRIPTION DRUGS, INCLUDING STEROIDS

CHICAGO – Eight defendants were charged in two separate criminal cases involving illegal distribution of controlled substances, including anabolic steroids and other prescription drugs over the Internet, federal law enforcement officials announced today. Five of the defendants were arrested today in the Chicago area, announced Patrick J. Fitzgerald, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, together with Gary G. Olenkiewicz, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration Chicago Field Division; Michael E. Cleary, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Chicago Field Office of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Office of Criminal Investigations; and Byram W. Tichenor, Special Agent-in-Charge of the Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division in Chicago.

According to the complaint in one of the cases, the FDA and the DEA began the investigation in 2005 following a complaint from a Massachusetts man that his son had used his credit card without permission to purchase anabolic steroids over the Internet from PMeds.com.

“For too long a virtual medicine cabinet has been open on the Internet with cyber drug dealers illegally doling out prescription medications. Today we closed shop on one of these rogue Internet pharmacies,” Mr. Olenkiewicz said. “*Operation Cyber-Roid* was successful due to the cooperative efforts of our partners at the FDA, IRS and the U.S. Attorney’s Office. The DEA will

continue to work with our law enforcement partners to put an end to the diversion of controlled substances.”

Mr. Cleary said: “This investigation again demonstrates the commitment of FDA’s Office of Criminal Investigations to aggressively pursue, with the cooperation of our law enforcement partners like the DEA and the IRS, the illegal distribution of prescription drugs over the Internet by those who greedily place the health and safety of U.S. consumers at risk to line their pockets.”

In one case, six defendants were charged in a criminal complaint with conspiracy to distribute controlled substances, including anabolic steroids, through the website PMeds.com. Defendants **Gary Calow**, 44, of Metepec, Mexico; his brother, **Larry Calow**, 44 of Tinley Park, and **Ricky Boros**, also known as Vince Kwiatkowski, 67, of Oak Brook, allegedly formed the Internet pharmacy business PurchaseMeds, Inc. and the website PMeds.com to sell prescription drugs online. The complaint alleges that beginning in January 2003, the website took drug orders from the Calow residence in Tinley Park, forwarded the orders to a site in Metepec, Mexico, and then smuggled anabolic steroids and other controlled substances into the United States for shipment to customers. PMeds also allegedly utilized commercial carriers to ship steroids concealed in electronic equipment and women’s shoes into the United States. The complaint further alleges that **Sergio Oliveira**, 46, of Hoschton, Ga., supplied PMeds with steroids and other controlled substances from his business in Belize. In return, Gary Calow wire transferred at least \$198,703 to Oliveira’s companies between November 12, 2003, and March 23, 2006, for payment of controlled substances and prescription drugs, according to the complaint. It further alleges that **Randy Soderlund**, 41, of Tinley Park, and Larry Calow’s daughter, **Beth Calow**, 20, of Hobart, Ind., processed Internet orders for drugs at the Tinley Park residence.

Larry Calow, Boros, Soderlund and Beth Calow were arrested today and were scheduled to appear at 4:30 p.m. today before U.S. Magistrate Judge Nan Nolan in U.S. District Court.

Also scheduled to appear at 5 p.m. today before Magistrate Judge Nolan is another defendant who was arrested, **Garishkumar Ray**, also known as Garish Ray, 54, of Glenview, who was charged together with **Sam Soans**, of India, in a related criminal complaint. They were charged with conspiracy to distribute prescription drugs other than for a legitimate medical purpose. In addition, Ray and Soans were charged with obtaining and dispensing controlled substances with a fictitious or expired DEA registration number. Ray is the chief executive officer and president of Dawn National Pharmacy (DNP) and Soans is the marketing manager of the website dnrxpharmacy.com. On occasion, DNP filled drug orders for the Calow brothers, who operated the PMeds website. DEA records show that DNP obtained 101,600 dosage units of hydrocodone, the generic name for Vicodin, between January and October 2006, without a valid DEA registration number. In addition, the complaint alleges that Ray and Soans regularly dispensed controlled substances, including hydrocodone, over the Internet without a valid doctor's prescription by utilizing doctors located in Puerto Rico to approve prescriptions without contact with patients.

The government is being represented by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew M. Schneider.

If convicted, the counts of conspiracy to distribute anabolic steroids or other Schedule III controlled substances carry a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. In addition, Ray and Soans face a maximum penalty of four years in prison on the charges of obtaining and dispensing controlled substances with a fictitious or expired DEA registration number. The Court, however, would determine the appropriate sentence to be imposed.

The public is reminded that a criminal complaint contains only charges and is not evidence of guilt. The defendants are presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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